

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**February 23, 2007
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met at the Arizona State Senate in Senate Hearing Room 1 at 1700 West Washington in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m., MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire
Mr. Jim DiCello
Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan
Ms. Johnna Haver
Ms. Eileen Klein
Ms. Karen Merritt
Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent:

Dr. Eugene Garcia
Dr. John Baracy

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Approval of December 14, 2006; December 18, 2006; January 18, 2007; January 25, 2007 minutes of Task Force meetings

Mr. DiCello moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Garcia Dugan seconded the motion. The task force members voted to approve the minutes of December 14, 2006; December 18, 2006; January 18, 2007; and January 25, 2007.

3. Discussion and Review of Revised Statewide Compensatory Instruction Fund Forms Presentation and discussion of the Compensatory Instruction Fund

Chairman Alan Maguire began by stating that the task regarding the documents was simply to review the documents, not to approve them.

Irene Moreno, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Office of English Language Acquisition Services, presented and explained the revised Compensatory Instruction forms and the process to

complete the forms. Ms. Moreno answered several questions from Task Force members concerning the Compensatory Instruction Fund amount (\$10 million) and allocations.

Mr. DiCello made the motion that the Task Force had reviewed the form as required in A.R.S. §15-756.11. The motion was carried 7-0.

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models

Chairman Maguire provided a synopsis of what has happened to date and announced that the survey was in progress and he would have it for the next meeting. He stated that the Task Force is now moving from learning to doing. He stated that the testimony before the Task Force showed that there are incredibly well intentioned and motivated people in the field that may not have sufficient time in their schedule or guidance to provide the required four hours per day of English Language Development. Chairman Maguire stated that he had asked consultant Kevin Clark to return to help the Task Force figure out how to go from what the law says and what the goals are to an ELL model or ELL models that can be handed out to people showing them how to get to the goal of the law (the four hours of English Language Development instructional time and English language proficiency in two years or less).

Mr. Kevin Clark stated that his purpose in synthesizing where things have come from and where they have been was to point the way forward. He had reviewed documents and other material provided by the Task Force. He stated that he desired to share his conclusions based on those materials and set forth a “pathway” by which to get practitioners working with students.

Mr. Clark asked if there were any questions about his credibility. He reminded the Task Force that he is in the business of helping districts get where want to go. He added that he has no ideological agenda. He does not want the Task Force to think he already has an answer. He is to help do what they want him to do. He has worked with school districts that have bilingual education programs, heritage maintenance programs and dual immersion programs. He has been doing this type of work for 17 years. Mr. Clark has worked with districts that have had serious compliance issues, many providing ELL programs by virtue of court order. He complimented the Arizona Department of Education on what they have accomplished to date.

Some of the conclusions Mr. Clark had drawn from the LEA testimony were:

1. Mixed use of terms; terminology all over the board
2. Little specificity with respect to program design; presentations that were not specific
3. Mixed data to verify effectiveness; mixed data sets
4. Great variances in time allocations-some vague
5. Vague research-based strategies
6. No clear definition of ELD (An operational definition of ELD is needed for this model.)
7. Paradox (Less ELD time is being spent at the elementary level than the secondary level, yet proficiency is easier for the elementary student than for a 17 year old.)

8. Program Protection Paradigms (They are needed to protect what is being done. Diligent analysis of the program also needs to be done.)

The Task Force discussed several points related to Mr. Clark's conclusions. Mr. Maguire asked for clarification on "pullout." Ms. Merritt answered that it is when students are separated to work on something with peers who are not native English speakers. Ms. Garcia Dugan clarified that students are put into an SEI classroom for at least one year, then moved into a mainstream class. Ms. Merritt added that ELD instruction is not for life. Students are to move back to mainstream classes when they are English proficient.

Ms. Haver explained the elementary school model she has seen in which students have four hours of separate ELD and then are in mainstream classes for two hours. Concerns about the strictness of the model because of varying populations among districts were addressed by Chairman Maguire. He conceded that the model needs flexibility but the model needs to fit the majority of the districts.

5. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models' Components

Mr. Clark presented his Four Components of a Program Model:

1. Policy (The Law)
2. Principles
 - Imbued in the law
3. Structure
 - Entry/exit criteria
 - Time
 - Student groupings
 - Goals of program
 - Prescriptive elements of model
4. Classroom Practices
 - Language use
 - Methodologies
 - Language objectives

With reference to the policy element, Mr. Clark stated that providing as much guidance as possible will help districts be compliant as soon as possible. A prescriptive law gets less variance.

The Task Force discussed some of the points regarding this first element in Mr. Clark's model. Mr. Maguire stated that the charge is to bridge the gap from the law to the classroom. Policy drives principles, which drives structure, which drives classroom practices.

Mr. Clark stated that there are explicit areas in law and implicit areas of law. He has concerns about the implicit areas. Many people in schools do not read the law; often it is grossly misunderstood, so it must be clear.

When clarifying the principles element of his model, Mr. Clark stated that this is the area where programs work or don't work. He explained that most practitioners cannot conceptualize the law. One of the goals is to help people to know what they need to believe, so they can comprehend what the law wants them to do. The other side of principles is assumptions. There are assumptions, for example, regarding how long it takes to learn English and whether or not English can be taught. There are issues of time, and there is a time element in the law. Assumptions can sink many things. Principles underlie the law then form the framework to conceptualize the SEI model(s). Unless the principles are clear and out front, people cannot read the law with understanding.

Mr. Clark next addressed the structure element of the model. He stated that this is the area most people will associate with *model*. The structure must be tightly operationalized. There needs to be a clear definition of Structured English Immersion. The elements here must be very prescriptive. A lack of prescriptive elements will make monitoring a program virtually impossible. The program must have elements that an observer can see and hear in order for the ADE staff to effectively monitor the program.

Mr. Clark discussed the last element of the model, classroom practices. He included language use guidelines and methodology. He addressed the questions, What will guide teaching for four hours of ELD? and What will I teach? Mr. Clark complimented the Arizona Department of Education for being further along than most states. He is impressed with the clear law and the ELL Proficiency Standards.

The Task Force discussed questions brought up by Mr. Clark's presentation. The concern about groupings looking different in districts with lower numbers was readdressed. What is meant by research-based and SEI was clarified. Chairman Maguire stated that research-based and SEI will be a de facto definition and they will continue to be looked at as the Task Force proceeds.

Ms. Garcia Dugan pointed out that at one point people were happy that ELL students were being taught in English. Now we are moving into the teaching of the English language. The law has helped this transition to occur. Now the instruction must be teaching the language while being as aligned to the curriculum as possible.

Chairman Maguire discussed the importance of the alignment of the ELL Proficiency Standards to the State Academic Standards. High mobility is problem, so commonality in the classroom is important. More consistency has a natural advantage.

Ms. Merritt was not sure just how prescriptive the Task Force can be. Mobility affects the length of time students take to reach English proficiency. Ms. Merritt is looking for research stating it

takes two years to become proficient. She asked if proficiency on AZELLA is enough for a student to be mainstreamed. This is a definition that needs to be worked on.

Ms. Garcia Dugan replied that leaving that definition up to teachers takes away any possibility for consistency. That is the purpose of the single statewide language proficiency test, AZELLA.

Ms. Merritt wanted to know if the student is considered proficient only after passing AZELLA or if the determination of proficient is after the two years of ELD. Ms. Garcia Dugan answered that the average amount of time it takes to achieve proficiency, on average, is two years. Chairman Maguire added that the law refers to what is normally intended (a period of time normally not to exceed a year). The SEI model being developed needs to work for the preponderance of English language learners. If the desire is for students to achieve English proficiency in two years or less, then a lot must be done. The model is developed for going down the middle of the road then looking at how to address the outliers. There will never be a model for 100% of the schools. (Note: the law requires that ELLs pass the statewide English proficiency test in order to become fluent English proficient and to be transferred into mainstream classrooms.)

6. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities

Chairman Maguire stated that the Task Force will walk around the circle model and delineate each of the components. One of the results may be a long list of classroom practices. Chairman Maguire hoped to have four meetings in March. He wants Mr. Clark and the consultants to work together, to stay ahead and have presentations and information ready for Task Force, so the meetings can be more efficient. The Task Force agreed.

7. Call to the Public

Cindy Segotta-Jones from Cartwright ESD expressed her concerns about Compensatory Instruction. The district knows the money will be coming, but is delayed. The difficulty with the delay is that during an audit they could be cited because there are a lot of journal entries. She simply wanted the Task Force to be aware of this.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.

Arizona ELL Task Force

Alan Maguire, Chairman
April 12, 2007